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Summits useful tools for dialogue, Bush believes

By Russell Warren Howe
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If he became president during Ronald Reagan's second term, George Bush would find regular summit meetings with his Soviet counterpart useful "as a means of staying in contact rather than an event requiring concrete agreements to be successful," the vice president has told The Washington Times.

But Mr. Bush warned that Soviet-U.S. relations would have to be "on a more productive track before regular meetings are a realistic possibility."

He also indicated that, as president, he would plan to retain George Shultz as secretary of state.

In response to a score of written questions on how he would handle foreign policy if he found himself occupying the Oval Office, the man who expects to be still a "heartbeat away from the presidency" after today's election results are known said, "We are encouraged by the tone of [Soviet leader Konstantin] Chernenko's recent message, although Soviet substance has not changed."

"I do not believe the United States should make unilateral concessions simply to get talks going."

Mr. Bush said he was in "fundamental agreement" with Mr. Reagan on foreign policy and that "I also have great confidence in Secretary Shultz."

Regarding the Philippines, the vice president welcomed the growth of "moderate opposition groups pressing for democratic change."

"While the situation there is serious," he noted, "it is not without hope. In the recent elections, moderate opposition parties scored marked gains...."

"The Philippines, while facing economic problems and problems of corruption, is a vital society, and it is important, whatever the outcome of the current turmoil, that we recognize the closeness of U.S.-Philippine ties."

Asked if he would work with similar opposition forces for change in Latin America, he said he "strongly supported" the Contadora process, spearheaded by Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela, which aims at peaceful resolution of conflicts between governments and dissidents.

"In the last four years, elected civilian governments have replaced unelected ones in Argentina, Bolivia, Honduras, El Salvador and Panama, while Uruguay, Guatemala and Grenada are in the process of making the transition to democracy," he said. "In contrast to the years of the Carter administration, not one country in Latin America has fallen to Marxist-Leninist revolution. Instead, Grenada has been liberated."

Mr. Bush said he would be prepared to normalize relations with Cuba only if Premier Fidel Castro "ceased his efforts to subvert and overthrow other governments in this hemisphere and ended his role as a Soviet military proxy in Africa and the Third World."

The vice president said he favored the 1982 Reagan initiative for solving the Palestine problem, but that he would not seek to impose it.

"The important thing is that the talks begin," he said. He opposed "permanent control by Israel" of the West Bank and Gaza, and supported Palestinian self-government in association with Jordan "as offering the best chance for a just and lasting peace." But, if the parties involved had other ideas, he would not "try to dictate to others."

He supported arms sales to moderate Arab states such as Jordan, Egypt and the Gulf countries, saying, "We should not insult our moderate friends and push them into the waiting arms of the Soviets by being indifferent to their very real self-defense needs."

Mr. Bush hoped for improved relations with Syria, but condemned Syrian "aggression" against Lebanon and its "coordination of terror."

On South Africa, he stressed that there should be "government by the consent of the governed" but not necessarily an American-style system.

"Apartheid is repugnant to our American values," he said, "and we're doing everything we can to encourage peaceful means of putting it where it belongs — in the history books...."

"Some progress is being made within South Africa — not enough, but far more than would be the case if we took the advice of those who would have us drop all contacts with South Africa."

He anticipated success in current negotiations to get South African and Cuban forces out of Angola and to bring independence to South African-governed Namibia.

Referring to his own negotiations with Japan to iron out trade differences between Tokyo and Washington, he said that "protectionism must be resisted. Our record is not perfect on this score, but it is a good one.... Protecting one industry raises costs to everyone else by making the American people pay higher prices for products that would not be competitive without protectionist barriers."

He was "optimistic about the future of the U.S.-Japanese relationship," but said it would take "continued efforts to ensure that the competitive aspects of the relationship, which are very healthy in themselves, do not overwhelm the cooperative foundation we have built."

Of China, to which he was the first post-revolution U.S. envoy, he said, "I am delighted with the progress that has been made in the relationship with the People's Republic." These ties are encouraging China to reform its economy